October 2, 3, 1998

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

Executive Notes

The NLTA Provincial Executive Council met on Friday, October 2, and Saturday, October 3, in St. John's. This edition of Executive Notes is designed to keep you informed and up to date on activities of Provincial Executive. The following is a summary of major decisions and discussions made at the Executive meeting. For further information on any of these issues, please contact any member of Provincial Executive or the staff person as indicated.

Association Priorities

The top four priorities for the Association for the school year are quality of work life, professional development restructuring, meeting membership demands, and teacher certification. Executive also discussed items such as student assistants, availability of leaves, downloading of more responsibilities on the classroom teacher, substitute days, and length of the school day.

As part of the new collective agreement, a committee is being established to design and conduct the study of Teacher Workload. There has been ongoing communication between the President's office and the Department of Education on the issue of teacher workload.

A Coordinating Committee for Professional Development restructuring has been established and is made up of representatives from the Department of Education, MUN, the School Boards and NLTA. The next meeting is scheduled for October 23. For further information please contact Beverley Park or René Wicks in the Professional Development Division.

Teacher Certification

Teacher Certification has been identified as a priority this year. The Ad Hoc Committee on Teacher Certification will develop an official statement of expectations of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association regarding continuing professional growth, based upon the principles that:

- continued growth be maintained in an environment where the necessary supports are provided;
- teacher participation is duly recognized.

For further information, contact Winston Carter or Mike Luedee, Co-chairs, Certification Review Committee, or Beverley Park, Professional Development Division.

Collective Agreement Implementation

The Collective Agreement has been printed and a copy for every teacher has been mailed to all schools. It is also available on the NLTA Home Page. A Benefits and Economic Services Bulletin is being drafted and will be available in all schools by next week. This BES Bulletin will address several issues of the Collective Agreement of concern to teachers, particularly changes in the Teachers' Pension Plan. A recent information sheet to teachers outlines conditions for the purchase of approved leave as worked service under the Teachers' Pension

Plan. Any existing periods of approved leave without pay for any reason may be purchased as worked service if approved documentation is provided. Another issue of the BES Bulletin will also be forthcoming to address other changes within the new Collective Agreement. For further information contact the Benefits and Economic Services Division.

School Administrators' Concerns
The working group comprised of representatives of Provincial Executive, SAC, Department of Education, and NLTA Staff is scheduled to meet during the week of October 5th at which time various decisions will be made concerning future deliberations on administrators' concerns. For further information contact Lloyd Hobbs, Benefits and Economic Services Division.

Substitute Teacher Days
As announced in an earlier correspondence, the substitute teacher day allocations for the current school year have been restored to the levels applicable in 1997-98. Namely the allocation per teacher per board for discretionary leave has been increased from 2.76 days to approximately 3.17 days. This has been achieved by restoring $400,000 to the substitute teacher budget. For further information, contact Wayne Noseworthy, Executive Director or Edward Hancock, Benefits and Economic Services Division.

Labrador Benefits Package
Schedule J of the provincial Collective Agreement contains the Labrador Benefits Agreement. This agreement is negotiated jointly by six unions which represent public employees in Labrador. These unions are the Canadian Union of Public Employees; Local Union 1615 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; the Newfoundland Association of Public Employees; the Newfoundland and Labrador Nurses Union; the Police Brotherhood of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary; and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. The first meeting of these groups is scheduled for November 3rd and joint negotiations with government will follow. The Association will be seeking input from teachers in Labrador re: suggestions to improve the Labrador Benefits Package. For further information contact Edward Hancock or Perry Downey, Benefits and Economic Services Division.

Group Insurance
Executive accepted a recommendation from the Group Insurance Trustees that the Voluntary Accidental Death and Dismemberment be extended from age 65 to age 75 at the current rates. Retirees age 65 to 69 inclusive would have the same coverage limitations and rates as active members and retirees under age 65. Retirees age 70 to 74 inclusive would have the same rates as retirees under age 69 except the maximum amount of Principal Sum would be $100,000.

Executive also discussed the September 11, 1998 memo to teachers titled "Changes to Health, Life and Dental Premiums", and the impact these premium increases will have on teachers. For further information please contact Ted Murphy, Chair of the Group Insurance Trustees, or Don Ash in the Benefits and Economic Services Division.

Professional Issues in Teaching Committee (PITCOM)
The Professional Issues in Teaching Committee (PITCOM) recommended that the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association initiate discussions with the Provincial Advisory Committee on Professional Development on the establishment of an annual province-wide professional development closeout comprised of two days running consecutively. This closeout would be presented within the following guidelines:

- this would be done within the currently allocated days referenced in the collective agreement for the length of the school year;
- district-wide, regional, and provincial initiatives would be available;
- acting either independently or in collaboration with one another, relevant PD activities could be developed and offered by school districts, SIC provincials and regionals, NLTA branches, and the Department of Education;
- the concept of individual choice be a prime consideration so that teachers can avail of activities which meet personally identified professional needs, notwithstanding the legitimate needs of districts;
- this would be accomplished with the already allocated P.D. days.

The NLTA Professional Development Division, in collaboration with the Special Interest Council Coordinating Committee will establish viability criteria for Special Interest Councils which will be applied to each council to determine future structures and directions.

For further information contact Mike Leudee, Chair of PITCOM, or the Professional Development Division.

Other Business

An NLTA staff person will be assigned responsibility for presenting accurate NLTA information or correcting inaccurate information that is presented in any media including Teachers in Cyberspace (TIC). For further information, contact Wayne Noseworthy, Executive Director.

The President is authorized to appoint an Association representative to the Government Advisory Committee re: Student Assistants. The Association wants to ensure that all requirements for student assistants are documented before June of each school year and that the concerns of teachers and the impacts on our membership are addressed in any discussions on the Student Assistant issue. For more information, contact Brendan Doyle or Wayne Noseworthy

The next regular meeting of Provincial Executive is scheduled for November 5 and 6 in St. John's. It will be followed by a Joint Council meeting on Friday evening and Saturday, November 7 at Airport Inn, St. John's. For further information please contact Geralyn Costello.